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20 April 1945

TO : Commanding Officer, Hqs. 2677th Regt. OSS (Prov.), APO 512,
U.S. Army

Attention: Chief, X-2

FROM : Chief, American Military Unit in Bucharest

SUBJECT : X-2 Personnel

I have written you separately about Major Bishop, until recently the X-2 Chief in Bucharest, and about the personnel generally as regards this unit. I feel, however, that it might be in order to comment in a little more detail on X-2 personnel in particular.

To a great extent the X-2 show in Bucharest has been a one-man affair, with all of the important matters handled personally by Major Bishop. When I spoke to Lt. Thames about staying on in Bucharest following the departure of Bishop and until Bishop's successor might arrive, he expressed an attitude almost of dismay over being given the responsibility of handling the entire operation. This was the result of so little responsibility having been given him under Bishop and thinking he would be expected to turn in the same volume of information. He just simply stated he would be unable to do so. I told him that the impossible was not expected, that he was simply to keep the X-2 activity going to the best of his ability.

It was in this conversation that he mentioned the fact of Pfc Pope handling some of the agent contacts and he particularly asked that Pope also be held until Major Hostler might arrive. This caused my request that Pope be allowed to stay and, subsequently, a signal was received approving such recommendation. Thames and Pope, therefore, will do their very best to carry on an effective operation until Major Hostler is cleared and can get here.

Unfortunately, Thames is not a good man for directing X-2 activity. My impression is that he has never had much responsibility in any job, that he is not very imaginative, does not handle people too well, and he therefore is going to have his troubles. He has been dominated in the past just as have the others of X-2 and to be suddenly thrust into the job of Acting Chief gives him the responsibility and authority but does not earn him the respect of the people he has working for him. Although not overly intelligent, it is my impression that he works hard. I will give him all the help possible and counsel with him whenever he desires.

It is unfortunate that right at the present time Cpl. Nemeth and Miss Bailey are ill. Cpl. Nemeth has a venereal disease (of the more serious type), which will keep him hospitalized for ten days after which he may return to work, according to the ACC Medical Officer. Two weeks ago Miss Bailey became ill with some sort of an intestinal infection and she is just now able to be out of bed. Several years ago she had colitis and her present illness seems to be a recurrence of that disease. I have talked with the Medical Officer about

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her and he seems to think she will regain her health to the point of being able to work in about a week but, thereafter, she should take care of herself by strict diet.

Upon receipt of the signal from X-2 in Bari asking that we return either Nemeth or Miss Bailey, I talked with Lt. Thames to ask which person he could spare with the least trouble. He stated that Miss Bailey could be spared better than Cpl. Nemeth and it was on the strength of his statement that we reported Miss Bailey would depart as soon as possible. Considering her illness I am inclined to believe it is a little better that she be the one to go whether or not she can be best spared. She likes it here and was quite disturbed when I told her that she was scheduled to leave. Considering that she will not return to work until around the twenty-sixth, at which time I will ask for departure clearance, it seems quite improbable that she will get away before some time between the fifth and sixth of May. The ACC has asked that I not seek clearance until the person named is actually ready to go and, because of her illness, I am reluctant to urge that she undertake the trip by plane until ten days or so after she is released by her physician.

I gained the impression from a recent signal that Major Hostler is not yet in Italy although expected momentarily and that he will be able to depart for Rumania when Russian clearance is obtained. Although there is no reason to believe he will not be cleared, the fact remains that no clearances whatever are coming through at the moment and General Schuyler expressed himself to me this week as being very pessimistic over the possibility of getting clearances on all whose names have been submitted to the Russians. I told him that I was particularly anxious to get Major Hostler in and he said he believed that eventually the Russians would clear him. All we can do is wait and press our case with the Russians as much as possible.

If Major Hostler is not cleared and Lt. Thames must remain indefinitely as the Acting Chief, it may be expected that X-2's performance will suffer, at least from a volume standpoint. There is no help for this situation, however, and the work will be carried on in the best possible manner consistent with the personnel available to do it.

In a conversation with Major Bishop recently, I was soliciting additional information from him about certain receipts for expenditures. This query evoked a question from him as to whether or not I was opening the sealed envelopes which he submitted with his vouchers. I told him that since I was approving the payment of the vouchers, I thought it was my privilege to look at the receipts, that after inspection the envelopes were re-sealed, and thereafter were securely held. He offered no serious objection beyond commenting that in Turkey the receipts had not been available for inspection to those approving the vouchers and that he thought it was generally the policy that receipts and other items which might identify agents should not be made available until after the war. I referred to the fact that before leaving Caserta for Bucharest the X-2 chief at Regimental Headquarters had informed me that the X-2 Branch in Bucharest was under my command and that I might take whatever action might seem necessary from an administrative standpoint. I further told Major Bishop that if he wanted to pass along to Regimental Headquarters an objection to the fact that I was looking at the receipts covering expenditures, he might do so and that I thereafter would be guided by any further instructions on the matter. I am presently in the process of

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analyzing all X-2 expenditures for the past four months, the result of which I will pass on to you when completed. If it is not within my authority to do this, I shall cease upon receipt of word to that effect from you.

I hope the impression is not gained that I am taking a rough hand with X-2 in Bucharest. It is not my natural desire to act in such a way and, particularly concerning a branch such as X-2, for I frankly admit I haven't the training and background in CE work to enable me to properly judge the situation. In the absence of some one who is so qualified I nevertheless feel that I have an obligation to OSS as a whole to at least pass on my impressions and any information which is at hand. I believe the branch is an important one in OSS and never at any time in Bari or elsewhere has there been a tendency on my part to minimize the need for a CE organization.

It is simply my desire to present the facts concerning X-2 as I see them and any suggestions, criticism, or directions from you or the X-2 Chief are invited.

Walter M. Ross
WALTER M. ROSS,
Lt. Col., AUS,
Chief of Unit.

cc: Mr. Joyce
Lt. Col. Maddox

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